



**THE DEVELOPMENT AND EVALUATION OF A WEB-BASED PROGRAM EMPOWERING NCAA COACHES TO EFFECTIVELY COMMUNICATE WITH STUDENT-ATHLETES OF CONCERN AND MAKE MENTAL HEALTH REFERRALS: A PILOT STUDY**

CHATHAM UNIVERSITY  
PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA



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# Project Rationale & Problem Statement

- College sports culture is unique
  - Barriers to accessing and/or receiving mental health treatment
    - Location of services, Times offered, Provider expertise, Stigma
      - 15.6 to 21.0 % rates of depression in college SA's
      - High rates for substance abuse, eating disorders, anxiety
      - Suicide is second leading cause of death for persons age 15-23
  - Help seeking behaviors can be hindered by team climate
    - Stigmatization can occur with coaches and teammates
    - Coaches may be an initial point of contact

Gullvier, Griffiths, Christensen (2012); Sherman, Thomson, Dehas, Wilford (2005); Sudano, Miles, Collins (2016)



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# Research Questions

- Introduce coaches to the constructs of rapport building, help-seeking behaviors, and mental health warnings signs, as well as to increase their awareness of the referral process.
- In accordance with this purpose, our research questions were:
  - What is the impact of a brief web-based educational module on coaches' self-reported knowledge of (a) rapport building with SAs, (b) help seeking behaviors of SAs, (c) and the mental health referral process? (**RQ1**)
  - What is the feasibility of the online training program? (**RQ2**)



# Description of Program

- ***Six web-based modules***
  1. Warning signs and help seeking behaviors
  2. Barriers to seeking help
  3. Coach-athlete relationships
  4. Case studies: Applying content knowledge to real-life examples
  5. Taking action: Referring a student-athlete
  6. Taking action: Talking to the student-athlete
- ***Structure***
  - 15 mins each, approx. 90 mins total
  - User/self-paced
- ***Login***
  - Username and password emailed to each coach
- ***Troubleshooting***
  - Password reset feature on website
  - Contact project co-leaders



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Before you begin, please submit your unique code name for this survey. Your code name is comprised of your mother's maiden name, followed by the last four digits of your phone number (ex: Smith7564).



PRETEST

## Warning Signs and Help Seeking Behaviors

MODULE ONE VIDEO

## Barriers to Seeking Help

MODULE TWO VIDEO



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# Coach-Athlete Relationships

MODULE THREE VIDEO

# Case Studies:

Applying Content Knowledge to Real-Life Examples

MODULE FOUR VIDEO

# Taking Action:

Referring a Student-Athlete

MODULE FIVE VIDEO

# Taking Action:

Talking with the Student-Athlete

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# Program Evaluation

- ***Pre- and Post-Course Surveys***
  - Learning Objectives (18 items)
  - Stigma Towards Depressed Students Measure (14 items)
  - Open-ended prompt for questions and comments

Jorm, Kitchener, Sawyer, Scales, & Cvetkovski, 2010



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# Results

- **RQ1:** What is the impact of a brief web-based educational module on coaches' self-reported knowledge of (a) rapport building with SAs, (b) help seeking behaviors of SAs, (c) and the mental health referral process?
- **Across the board, participants demonstrated statistically significant gains in their self-assessments.**

## T-Test

### Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	PreTest	2.1818	11	.56497	.17035
	PostTest	1.3939	11	.59289	.17876

### Paired Samples Correlations

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	PreTest & PostTest	11	.660	.027

### Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences		Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation		Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	PreTest - PostTest	.78788	.47779	.14406	.46690	1.10886	5.469	10	.000



# Results

- Interestingly, participants also demonstrated a trending (non-significant) decrease in their self-ratings of stigma toward students struggling with depression. No decreases were found in participants' ratings of the stigma they believed others would have in the same circumstances.

**Paired Samples Statistics**

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	JennyPreSelfStigma	4.0143	10	.51924	.16420
	JennyPostSelfStigma	4.2143	10	.59190	.18717
Pair 2	JennyPreOthersStigma	2.6143	10	.59113	.18693
	JennyPostOthersStigma	2.5714	10	.87027	.27520

**Paired Samples Correlations**

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	JennyPreSelfStigma & JennyPostSelfStigma	10	.764	.010
Pair 2	JennyPreOthersStigma & JennyPostOthersStigma	10	.498	.143

**Paired Samples Test**

		Paired Differences							
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	JennyPreSelfStigma - JennyPostSelfStigma	-.20000	.38803	.12271	-.47758	.07758	-1.630	9	.138
Pair 2	JennyPreOthersStigma - JennyPostOthersStigma	.04286	.77093	.24379	-.50863	.59435	.176	9	.864



# Results

- **RQ2:** What is the feasibility of the online training program?
  - Participants were able to access the modules and complete the training at their own pace.
  - The total time commitment was 90 minutes; most coaches felt this was reasonable, but some did not complete the entire training.
  - Examination of open-ended prompts indicated that the online format was effective.



# Discussion & Practical Applications

- Overall, coaches who completed the 90-minute online training felt more educated, prepared, and comfortable managing the potential mental health concerns of their student-athletes.
- The training modules can be adopted for use by other NCAA institutions, and content could be modified to be specific to each campus.



# Limitations & Future Directions

- Our sample size was small and therefore generalizability of our results should be viewed with caution.
- Future research is needed to assess the impact of online training courses with a larger, more diverse sample of coaches from a broader spectrum of institutions, including Divisions I, II, and III.



**MARY JO LOUGHRAN**  
**MLOUGHRAN@CHATHAM.EDU**

**LEIGH SKVARLA**  
**L.BRYANT@CHATHAM.EDU**

REFERENCE LIST IS AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST



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